



STATE NOTIFIES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLIENTS OF HIPAA BREACH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DENVER – October 10, 2014 – The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (the Department) announced today that protected health information was unintentionally disclosed in a recent postcard mailing. The postcards were mailed as part of a survey sent to people receiving behavioral health services through Medicaid or the Department of Human Services' Office of Behavioral Health. The information on the postcard did not include Social Security numbers or other information that is commonly used for identity theft. The Department received a complaint about this issue on September 9, 2014.

“We take the privacy of protected health information very seriously,” said Susan E. Birch, executive director. “The Department and our contractors are working together to improve procedures to ensure this does not happen again.”

The survey postcards were sent on July 30 and September 3, 2014. Approximately 15,000 people are affected. The Department sponsored the survey, which was conducted by Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. (HSAG) and Thoroughbred Research Group (Thoroughbred). The information on the postcard included first and last name, address, a return address for Thoroughbred, and the Department's logo. The postcard also asked survey participants to provide feedback regarding their behavioral health care services. Disclosing that the postcard addressee receives behavioral health services is a violation of the [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act](#) of 1996 (HIPAA) because the postcard was not contained in an envelope, and therefore could be read by someone other than the addressee.

The Department's contractor has added additional compliance reviews to prevent this in the future. The Department has added additional steps to monitor the process to further safeguard future surveys.

Thoroughbred is notifying impacted clients by mail. Consumers with questions can contact Thoroughbred at 1-844-273-7651, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., MT. Information is also available on the home page of the Department's website, Colorado.gov/hcpf.

About the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing: The department administers the Medicaid and Child Health Plan *Plus* programs as well as a variety of other programs for low-income Coloradans who qualify. The mission of the department is to improve health care access and outcomes for the people we serve while demonstrating sound stewardship of financial resources. For more information about the department, please visit Colorado.gov/hcpf.

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